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From the Editors

Birds are an ever-present part of our urban environments. Whether they are ravens or Common Mynahs, in our back yards in seemingly increasing numbers, or powerful owls in bushland parks and reserves, birds are a common sight in the urban expanse. This is perhaps not surprising, since Melbourne is blessed with a wide diversity of natural settings that provide avian wildlife with a range of habitats. Although the extent of wetlands around the metropolitan area have greatly diminished since European settlement, there are still areas of sufficient significance to attract large numbers of water birds from great distances. In addition, throughout the metropolitan area of greater Melbourne there are numerous reserves providing woodland and forest homes for birds. The result is the ongoing presence of species for pleasure and study.

Taking advantage of this, the 2008 Biodiversity Symposium, held by the Field Naturalist Club of Victoria in September, was organised around the theme of 'Birds and the Urban environment'. The papers presented on that occasion covered a wide range of issues related to birds, from the historical record of bird watching and egg collecting around the region, to minimising the impact on bird species of human recreational use of wetlands, to the results of long-term studies of bird numbers in specific environments.

These were interesting papers, deserving of a wider audience than they reached on the day. For that reason alone, the Editors have much pleasure in presenting these papers in this issue of *The Victorian Naturalist*.

Front cover: Little Egret. Photo by Michael Weston